

Cannon's Savannah (Maston House)
Atlanta Seaford Rd. (County Rd. 30)
Seaford vicinity
Sussex County
Delaware

HABS No. DE-192

HABS
DEL,
3-SEFD.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
CANNON'S SAVANNAH
(Maston House)

HABS
DEL,
3-SEFO.V,
1-

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Location: West side Atlanta-Seafood Road (County Road 30), approximately .5 mile from its intersection with County Road 561, approximately 3.5 miles northwest of Seaford, Seaford vicinity, Sussex County, Delaware.

Present Owner: John Herbert Litchford, Sr.

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: Cannon's Savannah, dating from 1727, is one of the oldest brick structures in Sussex County. It is composed of two single-cell units joined on axis, and it is one of the few remaining Delaware examples of this significant stage in the development of house plans.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1727, added to in 1733. There is a brick inscribed "1727" to the right of the entrance, now closed, on the northwest facade. In the diapered brickwork of the northeast gable, there is a brick inscribed "1733."
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Sussex County, unless otherwise noted.

1758: Proprietors of Maryland
to
Stephen Cannon

A folder in the Delaware Archives marked "Maryland Lands c. 1680-1770" shows Stephen Cannon as the patentee to a 450-acre tract called "Cannon's Savannah."

1793: Will September 28, 1793 recorded in Will Book A-63, pp. 134 and 137.

Stephen Cannon, Sr.
to
Stephen Cannon, Jr.

He wills two tracts of land including
"Cannon's Savannah" containing 430 acres
and his dwelling plantation.

- 1798: Will September 12, 1798 recorded in Will
Book A-63, pp. 135-136.

Stephen Cannon, Jr.
to
Lilly Wilson (wife of James Wilson)
Elizabeth Wingate (wife of Isaac Wingate)

Stephen Cannon divided his estate between
his two daughters.

- 1817: Deed November 29, 1817 recorded in Deed Book
33, p. 314.

Betsey Wingate (widow of Isaac Wingate)
to
Elijah Cannon

Betsey Wingate had agreed to convey 30 acres of
land by a bond dated December 2, 1815, to Elijah
Cannon. She agreed to convey 30 additional
acres by a bond dated February 19, 1816, to
Elijah Cannon. The deed finalized the
transactions. Price: \$251.

- 1823: Deed September 13, 1823 recorded in Deed Book
36, p. 16.

Betsey Wingate
to
Elijah Cannon

This was the remainder of Betsey Wingate's land
that she received from her father, Stephen
Cannon, and her brother. 172 acres; price: \$500.

- 1849: Survey of the estate of Elijah Cannon in Orphans
Court Book V, p. 332, dated September 18, 1849.
Elijah Cannon died intestate on May 6, 1849. One
tract of land labeled lot #3 was included in the
survey. It contains 316 acres, 2 rods, and 19
square perches of land, and the house.

1850: March 19, 1850 in Orphans Court Book B,
p. 168.

Elijah Cannon Estate
to
Cornelius T. Cannon

Lot #3.

1851: Deed January 11, 1851 recorded in Deed
Book 58, pp. 358-360.

Cornelius T. Cannon
to
Halsey H. Maston

316 acres, 2 rods, 19 perches; price: \$2,212.

1855: Sussex County Road Records contain a plot of a
road that passes this house.

1863: January. An insurance policy with the Kent County
Mutual Insurance Company for Haulsey H. Maston of
Seaford described this house.

1890: Deed April 11, 1890 recorded in Book 113, p. 292.

Halsey H. Maston
to
James A. Brown

122 acres, 64 perches; price: \$3,000.

1903: Deed September 24, 1903 recorded in Book 145,
pp. 430-432.

James A. Brown
to
Edward M. Williams

86 acres, 1 rod, 24 perches; price: \$3,300.

1904: Deed August 2, 1904 recorded in Book 149,
pp. 185-186.

Edward M. Williams
to
Katie Staub

66 acres, 1 rod, 24 perches; price: \$3,500.

1907: Deed August 24, 1907 recorded in Book 160,
pp. 500-501.

Katie Staub, et al.
to
Isaac Williams

66 acres, 1 rod, and 24 perches; price: \$3,500.

1920: Deed December 6, 1920 recorded in Book 225,
pp. 82-84.

Isaac W. Williams
to
Levin H. Williams

66 acres, 1 rod, and 24 perches; price: \$3,500.

1953: Levin H. Williams died intestate leaving the
property to his widow for life, and the remainder
to his three children who are Mary J. Truitt,
Raymond H. Williams, and Elsie Lee Turner.

1962: Deed May 8, 1962 recorded in Book 547, pp. 386-388.

Mary J. Truitt, Raymond H. Williams,
Elsie Lee Turner, et al.
to
John Herbert Litchford and wife

66 acres, 1 rod, 24 perches; price: \$1.

4. Alterations and additions: The original one-room section of the
house had a one-room addition in 1733.

Two photographs appearing in H. C. Forman's Tidewater Maryland
Architecture and Gardens (NY: Bonanza Books, 1956), pp. 45 and 90,
show this house in a considerably different state than it now
appears. There was a garage-type opening near the east end of the
southeast front; this section has since been replaced with newer
brick and a window. On the northeast end there was a shed-roofed
wood-framed garage, attached to the building but probably not
connected internally. Today, on the northeast end there is a small
one-story shed-roofed addition. Two windows in each gable had been
filled in with brick; three of these have since been reopened. The
roof and shed dormers were covered with wood shingles. They have
since been covered with asphalt shingles. The two chimneys were
corbeled at the top.

Prepared by: James Stewart
Architectural Historian
Division of Historical
and Cultural Affairs
1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This is an eighteenth-century one-room house with a similar one-room addition on the axis.
2. Condition of Fabric: Fair

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: Approximately 50'x27', one-and-a-half stories, with a one-story shed-roofed wing on the northeast end.
2. Foundation: Brick with stepped watertable. Flemish bond on three sides and running bond on part of rear.
3. Walls: Red brick, Flemish bond with glazed headers, partially whitewashed, with diapering in gables. At the eave line on the gable ends, three courses of projecting bricks form a belt course across the face, which projects slightly at the corners. There is a break in the brickwork to indicate that the east end was built at a separate time. Vertical wood siding is on the east addition.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick load-bearing walls with wood roof rafters.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: There is a brick stoop with a brick step at the main entrance on the southeast facade.
6. Chimneys: There is a brick chimney on each gable end of the house.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance on the southeast facade has a deep recessed jamb with sloping brick sill, wood surround and a three-panel wooden door with nine-light glass panes in the upper portion. There is a wooden screen door. A door directly opposite the front door has been bricked up on the northwest facade.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Wooden windows have six-over-six-light single-hung sashes. Dormer windows have four-over-four-light single-hung sashes with simple wood trim. One window on the northwest facade, east end, has a rowlock lintel over window. A window on the southwest gable end has been bricked up.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with asphalt shingle covering. A shed roof with corrugated metal covering is on the wooden addition.
- b. Cornices, eaves: Boxed cornice with simple wood rake on gables.
- c. Dormers: There are two shed-roof dormers on the southeast and northwest facades of the house. The sides have wood shingle covering and each has an asphalt roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: There are two rooms in the brick section, the main room on the southwest and the kitchen on the northeast. On the center of the southwest wall is a large fireplace with a closet on its left and a door enclosing the winding stairway on the right. There is a small closet under the stair. On the northeast wall, there is a large fireplace that is closed. To the left of the fireplace is a closet and to the right is an exterior door leading to the addition. The addition is one room.
 - b. Second floor: Essentially two rooms, divided by a small hall with a closet on each side. The stairwell is in the west corner and is lit by a window in the southwest gable. There is a closet in the south corner. In the north corner a closet has been converted to a bathroom with a window.
2. Stairways: The enclosed stairway is a winder with the open-string first two steps in the main room. There is no handrail; risers and treads are wood.
 3. Flooring: Carpet covers the main room floor and linoleum covers the kitchen. The two bedrooms upstairs have wide (14") plank floors.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are painted plaster. The ceiling in the kitchen is a fiber tile with patterns. Ceilings in the bedrooms have sloping sides.
 5. Doorways and doors: Wood paneled doors and simple wood surrounds. The bedroom door is vertical planks with horizontal braces top and bottom and a thumb latch.

6. Decorative features: There is a wooden mantel and surround at the fireplace in the kitchen. Some modern cabinets have been added. The fireplace in the main room is brick with an arched opening and a brick mantel. The hearth is herringbone pattern brick with a rowlock border.
7. Mechanical Equipment: Heating is by an oil space heater in the main room. There is a grill in the ceiling above the fireplace in the kitchen to allow heating of the bedroom above. Modern lighting fixtures and plumbing.

D. Site:

The house faces southeast, behind a modern framehouse. Cultivated land surrounds the house, which is set back from the road approximately 100 yards. There are two large trees in front of the house.

Prepared by: John P. White
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings Survey
August 1975

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

A. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Deed Books: Sussex County Court House. Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

Survey Books: Sussex County Court House.

B. Secondary Sources:

Beers, D. G. Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia: Pomeroy and Beers, 1868.

Forman, Henry Chandlee. Tidewater Maryland Architecture and Gardens. New York: Bonanza Books, 1956.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, State of Delaware, and was financed with funds provided by the State of Delaware. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1975 at the Historic American Buildings Survey Field Office, Dover, Delaware, by John P. White (Assistant Professor, Texas Tech University), Project Supervisor; James Stewart (University of Delaware), Sally Schwartz (Harvard University), Joan M. Norton (Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs), Project Historians; Charles B. Tonetti (Syracuse University), Architect; Student Assistant Architects, Scott Barnard (University of Pennsylvania), Frederick K. Read (University of Notre Dame), and Mark T. Wellen (Texas Tech University). The written data were edited by HABS historian Alison K. Hoagland in January 1983.